Strategic Initiatives

Summative Evaluation of Career Services – Saskatchewan

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Acronyms

Career Services (CS)
Compact Disc-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM)
Community Consultation Group (CCG)
Electronic Mail (E-Mail)
Human Resources Centre of Canada (HRCC)
Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)
Information Technology (IT)
Keewatin Career Development Corporation (KCDC)
Labour Force Development Agreement (LFDA)
Labour Market Information (LMI)
New Careers Corporation (NCC)
Northern Career Services Network (NCSN)
Northern Project (NP)
Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST)
Regina Career Linx (RCL)
Regional Colleges (RC)
Rural Project (RP)
Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN)
Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)
Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board (SLFDB)
Strategic Initiatives (SI)
Wide Area Network (WAN)

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Executive Summary

The Career Services (CS) program tested innovative ways to identify, collect and disseminate career information and related delivery services designed to make Career Services more accessible to clients and target groups. The Career Services Strategic Initiatives (SI) pilot projects provided opportunities for testing alternative methods of collecting current, relevant career information as well as developing effective delivery mechanisms. The primary components tested in the Career Services projects were the use of multimedia technology and the use of a community-based partnership approach.

In order to explore the development of partnership models, the Career Services Working Group identified three projects where strong community linkages could be built and maintained. The three projects (depicted in Appendix Two) were the Rural (RP), the Northern (NP) and the Urban/Regina, which later became known as Regina Career Linx (RCL). These projects tested multimedia Career Services delivery in these three distinct regions.

The focus of the summative evaluation is the results and effects of the projects on clients, communities and other stakeholders.

Key Findings

This section provides key findings of the outcomes and impacts that emerged from the summative evaluation. The specific projects relating to each key finding are identified.

Relevance

a. Access to Career Services delivered by computer technology and interagency networking (e.g., referrals) improved services to clients (RP, NP, RCL).

b. Computer technology made it easier and faster for stakeholders to find up-to-date career development and labour market information (RP, NP, RCL).

Project Design and Delivery

c. The challenges of technology were cost, lack of expertise by counsellors and clients in the use of technology, and time for updating information (RP, NP, RCL).

d. Training potential counsellors in multimedia technology and career counselling methodologies improved client services (RP, NP).

e. Training northern clients in the use of multimedia technology improved the Career Services they are able to access (NP).

f. Multimedia resource centres required a career counsellor skilled in the use of multimedia technology on staff to guide and assist clients with information technology for career development (RP, NP, RCL).

Program Success

g. Input from community-based groups in the design and implementation of multimedia offerings and resource centres resulted in improved client services (RP, NP, RCL).

h. Partnerships among agencies coordinated and streamlined Career Services delivery (RP, NP, RCL).

i. Partnerships and technological linkages with a variety of computer sites enhanced coordination between agencies (RP, NP, RCL).

j. Community partnership structures and boards had the highest level of commitment when all members had an equal vote, meaningful input into the decision-making process and a feeling of genuine ownership of the project (RP, NP, RCL).

k. Sharing of information, strengthening of partnerships and access to technology were the main benefits of the partnership models in the Career Services program (RP, NP, RCL).

l. The involvement of both the federal and provincial governments has enhanced the coordination of Career Services delivery and government agencies and has resulted in improved client service (RP, NP, RCL).

Lessons Learned

1. Multimedia technology was effective for the delivery of Career Services.

2. Longitudinal data collection for evaluation should have been incorporated into Career Services delivery.

3. Partnerships resulted in information sharing and leveraging of resources.

Recommendations

1. Continue the delivery of Career Services using multimedia resources. These resources need to be backed up with technical support and upgraded on a regular basis.

2. There must be on-going development to ensure Career Services products are kept current and relevant to local needs.

3. Ensure counsellors are trained in both counselling methodology and the use of technology.

4. Provide on-going training in the use of multimedia technology for clients.

5. Implement province-wide coordination of Career Services including one Web site with northern, rural and urban data.

6 Continue monitoring and assessment of trends in Career Service delivery. Provide opportunities to implement new options in Career Service delivery and evaluate their effectiveness for Saskatchewan.

7. Increase the number of locations where Career Services information is available.

8. Facilitate community partnerships and ensure that partnerships are built so that all parties are able to provide meaningful input into the decision-making process.

Management Response

Career Services is one of three initiatives under the Canada-Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives Agreement. The Career Services Summative Evaluation was undertaken by Calibre Consultants Inc. The finding and recommendations have been carefully reviewed and the findings accepted. The evaluation results will be reviewed in the context of ongoing programs and services and shared with partner organizations. Where possible, the findings will be used in the continuous improvement of service to clients.

1. Introduction

1.1 Career Services Strategic Initiative

Using a community-based approach of participation and involvement, the Career Services Strategic Initiative developed and tested multimedia programs, products and strategies to assist clients, job seekers, students, employers, career counsellors and others with the process of career planning and decision-making. Three pilot projects (northern, rural and urban Saskatchewan) were developed. There are important cultural and geographic differences among the three areas which the Career Services (CS) pilot projects recognized and worked with to achieve effective approaches.

The CS initiative targeted a community-based approach to service delivery and the use of multimedia technology to enhance service delivery.

1.1.1 CS Northern Project

The Northern Project (NP) is sponsored by the Keewatin Career Development Corporation (KCDC), a non-profit organization incorporated in March 1996. KCDC represents a partnership of the following:

- Athabasca First Nations (Black Lake, Fond-du-Lac and Wolliston Lake);
- Dumont Technical Institute;
- Île-à-la-Crosse School Division;
- Jim Brady Development Corporation;
- Meadow Lake Tribal Council;
- Methy Pathways;
- Northcote Metis Pathways;
- Northern Lights School Division;
- Northlands Regional College;
- North West Region III Metis Pathways; and
- Woodland Cree Enterprises.

The NP has developed a specific northern-relevant career assessment process, with two goals: to encourage northern clients to increase their level of education; and to access career opportunities. This process includes methods by which counsellors can assist northerners to deal with unique problems that may affect them, and is designed to complement and be sensitive to the northern culture.

There were 43 northern communities participating in the Northern Project and in each of these a counsellor or outreach worker was involved. These individuals, as part of the Northern Career Services Network (NCSN), were trained in northern career counselling methods and multimedia Career Services information dissemination. Several of these people had not previously been trained as counsellors. After the training, they were able to access labour market or Career Services information more quickly using computer technology provided by the project.

In the NP, it is significant that prior to the start of the project, there was little Internet access to Career Services information. The project brought training to northern counsellors in career counselling methods and the use of technology for career development. Many field locations upgraded their technology and were connected to the Internet. Career counsellors learned how to use technology and multimedia resources for the first time. In many cases, both clients and counsellors were given the opportunity to access the technical equipment necessary; in others, client access was restricted or limited. A CD-ROM was developed for training and career options as part of expanding the multimedia approach. Two surveys of the labour force, which are currently being undertaken, will provide additional data to enhance other forms of labour market information.

1.1.2 CS Rural Project

Linking seven of the province's regional colleges, the Rural project (RP) established and tested a multimedia-resource Career Services centre in each of the participating regional colleges. These resource centres were designed to assist people in meeting their career planning objectives, primarily by enabling users to access Career Services information from a variety of locations with the use of an on-line computer. Equipment and career resources for special needs clients were also tested.

The centres have support staff who provide training on the use of the career resource centre and in communication with other sites. The centres were open to the public, some for extended hours. The centres shared resources and information and a marketing strategy was developed to promote the centres and their services.

1.1.3 CS Regina Career Linx Project

Three agencies that provided complementary Career Services in Regina were the sponsors of the Regina Career Linx (RCL) project: Human Resources Centre of Canada (HRCC) Regina; Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST); and Wascana Campus and New Careers Corporation (NCC). The primary focus of the project was to meet client needs through collaboration, coordination and sharing of resources.

Career Services Projects' Goals, Objectives, Products and Services

The following chart outlines the relationship between the identified goals and objectives and the products and services developed within the projects.

TABLE 1.1
CS Project Products and Services
Northern Project Products and Services

Prop. Inno.	Outputs Activity or Product	Description	Status at September, 1998
New	Internet access	Technology information was not in existence in the north prior to the NP. Counsellors are now using the Internet for career development purposes; computer labs and Internet connections exist in schools; and the project did a Web site for Northlands College.	Operational
New	KCDC Web site	Contains Career Services and related information.	Operational
New	KCDC Web site products	Consist of NCSN contact information; KCDC Board member contact information; education and training opportunity listings; referral services for post-secondary and training funding sources and for economic development sources for the North; and Labour Market Information, including economic sector studies (provided by the Northern Labour Market Committee) and links to career search resources as well as to other Northern Saskatchewan information, such as the Northern Business Directory, tourism, business and community development, mapping, Aboriginal links and other northern Web sites.	Operational
New	Curriculum for training NCSN counsellors	In cooperation with the University of Saskatchewan and the Dumont Technical Institute, the training curriculum was designed to offer first-time training to northern counsellors in career counselling methods, including the use of technology. Training was conducted in workshops and over long distances via the Internet and E-mail.	Operational
New	Training and professional development	Training was provided to both NCSN counsellors (e.g., northern counselling system, northern skills identification, basic Internet training) and high school students (e.g., development of the KCDC Web site, training in Web site authoring).	
New	Video entitled "From Dream to Destiny"	A documentary on recent grade 12 graduates in Northern Saskatchewan who are interviewed on their hopes, dreams and future plans. It was intended to help practitioners offer youth role models and encouragement. One hundred copies were sent to NCSN counsellors and to local cable companies that aired the video on local cable channels.	Operational

TABLE 1.1 (continued) CS Project Products and Services Northern Project Products and Services			
Prop. Inno.	**Outputs Activity or Product**	**Description**	**Status at September, 1998**
New	Mentorship program	Identified experienced northerners to role model for younger people (K-12 students). Mentors publicize the program by making presentations at local schools.	Operational
New	Northern Education Conference	Sponsored by KCDC, this conference brought together northern people to learn about education, employment and economic development issues concerning the North today. It raised public awareness about careers and provided networking opportunities for career counsellors and other stakeholders.	Operational
New	Keewatin career interest inventory card sort	In cooperation with the University of Saskatchewan, a new northern relevant skills identification system was developed for use by northern counsellors and clients. This set of cards has pictures of occupations on them and is intended to help northerners choose careers (its use may be applicable outside of northern Saskatchewan).	Undergoing testing
New	CD-ROM of grade 10 timetable	The CD-ROM will indicate availability of post-secondary education, training options and career choices. The initial research on the vast array of post-secondary offerings and career options has been completed, but the database must be developed. Descriptions of occupations and the educational routes necessary to access them will be provided.	Under development
New	Employer services	Services to assist northern businesses with lay-offs (e.g., Cameco).	Operational
New	Marketing	Promotion of northern Career Services through radio, newspapers, newsletters, Internet, posters, school visits and mentorship program.	Operational

TABLE 1.1 (continued) CS Project Products and Services Northern Project Products and Services			
Prop. Inno.	**Outputs Activity or Product**	**Description**	**Status at September, 1998**
New	Partnerships	For the first time, a forum of all relevant parties in northern education was brought together for the regular discussion of Career Service provision in the North via the KCDC Board, which comprised the core of the CS Sub-committee of the Northern Labour Market Committee.	Operational
New	Survey data	A needs assessment was conducted prior to project implementation. Two surveys of the northern labour force have been conducted in the northern region: one in 1995 using a sample of 1,000 residents and another in September 1998 of 5,000 residents. Upon completion of the analysis, these surveys will provide "snapshots" of the labour force (e.g., client needs, skills, etc.) that will enhance official census data, which is usually outdated upon release.	Under development

TABLE 1.1 CS Project Products and Services Rural Project Products and Services			
Prop. Inno.	**Outputs Activity or Product**	**Description**	**Status at September, 1998**
New	Seven career resource centres	Seven career resource centres have been established in seven regional colleges, offering computer stations, career software and career written materials.	Operational
New	James Smith Reserve satellite office	Established a Career Services satellite office on the James Smith Reserve.	Operational
New	Extended hours program	Some Regional College Career Centres established extended hours in order to increase client accessibility to the career resource centres.	Operational
New	Needs assessment surveys	Conducted needs assessment surveys with both business and industry.	Completed

TABLE 1.1 (continued) CS Project Products and Services Rural Project Products and Services			
Prop. Inno.	**Outputs Activity or Product**	**Description**	**Status at September, 1998**
New	Internet, etc.	Introduced Internet and other new technologies to rural Saskatchewan offices (in many cases, for the first time), including orientation, training and trouble-shooting.	Operational
New	Career-plan.net Web site	Using the electronic network, linkages were created between occupational information (e.g., skills and educational requirements), training and job opportunities and other labour market information.	Under development
New	Computer technology testing	Testing of the provincial electronic computer network developed in cooperation with the Labour Market Information (LMI) initiative.	Under development
New	Career Talk	The "Career Talk" newspaper column was established.	Operational
New	Library system	Established a computerized lending library system for career resources e.g., CD-ROMs, videos, books).	Operational
New	Seminars	Multimedia presentations for high school students with instruction on Internet searches for career services. Presentations were also made for community groups, including businesses, libraries, Aboriginal groups, service agencies and trade fairs.	
New	Links to regional colleges	Created to easily access course and graduate information on programs.	Operational
New	Career Resource Directory	A directory of Career Service practitioners and resources available in Saskatchewan in print and electronic forms.	Operational
New	Career development Web sites directory	A directory of career development Web sites available in electronic form on the Internet.	Operational
En-hanced	Computerized evaluation	Developed for students and practitioners to assess Career Services Web sites.	Operational
New	Guidelines	Established guidelines for accessibility for each of the seven career development centres.	Operational

TABLE 1.1 (continued)
CS Project Products and Services
Rural Project Products and Services

Prop. Inno.	Outputs Activity or Product	Description	Status at September, 1998
New	"Job Search" television series	Cooperative project with Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN) for "Job Search" television series and the provision of print materials to support televised courses.	Operational
New	Marketing Strategy	Coordinated seven-site marketing strategy and production for Web site, business cards, brochures, newspaper advertisements, posters, T-shirts, signage, radio and television promotions.	Operational
New	Partnerships	Established Community Consultation Groups of 65 people representing 59 organizations. Partnership work with Community Access Program (CAP), SCN and other community contacts (meetings, electronic and written communication, work-sharing of summer students).	Operational
New	Professional development	Provided training in technology and multimedia resources to career counsellors at each of the seven centres.	Operational

TABLE 1.1 CS Project Products and Services Regina Career Linx Products and Services			
Prop. Inno.	**Outputs Activity or Product**	**Description**	**Status at September, 1998**
New	One-stop public career service centre	A centrally accessible location where clients could independently access the necessary resources, especially technological resources, to assist them in Career Services, or to direct clients to other appropriate agencies	Operational
New	RCL Web site	Contained Career Services and labour market information with locally based and developed content that emphasized human contact and interaction.	Operational
New	Web site products	Question and answer service, chat room, community career calendar, Jobs People Love, job posting service, résumé posting service, job matching service, employer advice on hiring and other human resource issues and topics, skills and personal evaluation for job seekers, job search skills, community resources, employment resources for people with disabilities, relocation advice for moving to Regina, entrepreneurial resources, Internet tutorial, search engine, links to other career and employment resources and development of a self-service and accessibility model for use with clients.	Operational
En-hanced	Training information	Access to on-line information regarding course descriptions at SIAST.	Operational
New	Training	Training provided to staff of partner organizations (HRDC, SIAST-Wascana Institute and Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST) for transition to the new Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services Centres).	Operational
New	Needs assessments	Consultations on community needs assessments, including focus groups, labour market analysis and technology analysis. Available in print form.	Operational
New	Marketing	Promotion via newspaper advertisements, newspaper articles, radio, Internet, newsletters and trade shows.	Operational

TABLE 1.1 (continued) CS Project Products and Services Regina Career Linx Products and Services			
Prop. Inno.	**Outputs Activity or Product**	**Description**	**Status at September, 1998**
New	Partnerships	Established committees for regular planning meetings with input into the work of RCL; consist of employers, K-12 education, human resource professionals, career counsellors, government agencies (federal, provincial and municipal) and other organizations concerning health, disabilities, rehabilitation, community associations, and employer and professional organizations.	Operational
New	CD-ROMs	A CD-ROM was produced in Regina entitled "Jobs People Love," utilizing in-house and local resources and providing career profiles about local people. Other CD-ROMs provided for work seekers included "Career Cruising," "Career Planner," "Résumé Maker Deluxe" and "WinWay Resume." Other CD-ROMs provided for employers included "Best Manager" and "Performance Now."	Operational

All multimedia products were developed ensuring content was as user — friendly as possible. Although self — directed service was emphasized, staff assistance was provided to new users and for those who required assistance in using the technology.

The intended mandate of the NP was to enhance Career Services delivery in northern Saskatchewan. The NP achieved the following intended objectives:

Objectives	The Northern Project Goals	Products and Services
Considered and respected the unique Aboriginal cultural backgrounds of the northern workforce.	• Established an electronic career network.	• KCDC Web site, its products and increased Internet access.
Were available to the communities in which the workforce lives.	• Conducted a public career-awareness campaign.	• KCDC Web site and increased Internet access. • Employer services.
Helped the northern workforce address the social and health problems that impair abilities to function on the job and in the classroom.	• Developed and used a northern career guidance process.	• Curriculum for training NCSN counsellors.
Provided encouragement to increase education levels and access occupations that are not traditional to the northern workforce.	• Trained counsellors on network and guidance process. • Trained high school students in the development of web sites.	• Video entitled "From Dream to Destiny." • CD-ROM on post-secondary and career options. • Mentorship Program.
Were quickly responsive to changes in the northern labour market.	• Developed northern LMI.	• Education Conference. • Survey data.
Provided information and Opportunities for communication about economic development endeavors in northern Saskatchewan.	• Established an electronic career network. • Provided northern LMI.	• Keewatin career interest inventory card sort. • KCDC Web site, its products and increased Internet access.
Identified existing Career Service delivery systems and outputs.	• Established linkages between Career Services resources, educational programs, job opportunities and labour market information.	• Career Resource Directory. • Career development Web sites directory. • Computerized lending library system.

The Northern Project (continued)		
Objectives	Goals	Products and Services
Measure clients' awareness and satisfaction with Career Services currently provided.	• Conducted needs assessments in each of the seven regions where CS centres were located.	• Needs assessments.
Identify the users and non-users of Career Services and determine their needs.	•	•
Measured reasons for non-use.	•	•
Identified preferences and requirements for alternative delivery systems.	• Established standards for testing and evaluating multimedia resources and technology for monitoring impacts on clients and counsellors.	• Computerized evaluation form developed. • Survey of 100 career counsellors on multimedia resources. • Extended hours program.
Identified community partners and stakeholders and their roles and commitment to Career Services.	• Promoted the development of partnerships among agencies and organizations to ensure sustainable delivery of multimedia services in rural Saskatchewan in the future. • Established community advisory groups for each college region to provide recommendations regarding program development and implementation.	• Career Resource Directory. • Partnerships developed. • Seminars with high school students and community groups.
Identified college and community professionals' needs and tools.	• Provided technical support to the new centres and orientated users to the new technology. • Provided professional development to assist practitioners in using the new resources and technology effectively.	• Career-plan.net Web site. • Professional development. • Seminars with high school students and community groups. • Seven career resource centres. • James Smith Reserve satellite office. • Increased Internet access. • "Career Talk" newspaper column. • "Job Search" television series.

Of these objectives, the RP did not identify the users and non-users of Career Services, determine their needs, or measure reasons for non-use. Of the goals established to attain these objectives, the RP did not establish a fully equipped multimedia resource centre in each college region that was linked to other sites throughout the region as part of a wide-area network (WAN) linking. The RP fulfilled the objectives and completed the goals with the assistance of the accompanying products and services.

Regina Career Linx		
Objectives	Goals	Products and Services
Promoted self-managed planning within an Internet and multimedia environment.	• Developed useful tools, services and resources to help work seekers make career decisions and for employers to use when making employment decisions.	• One-stop public Career Service centre. • Training information.
Made the Internet and multimedia products living tools used by providers and customers.	• Reviewed existing multimedia career/ employment resources. • Developed a customer-centred web site. • Developed local content. • Developed and selected content that reflects diversity. • Established a testing and training centre.	• RCL Web site and Web site products and links. • CD-ROMs • Needs assessments.
Reduced the non-productive time between work search and hiring experienced by employers and work seekers.	• Reduced the average time spent by work seekers in finding employment and employers in finding employees. • Reduced the cost in lost earnings by work seekers in finding employment and cost in lost productivity experienced by employers.	• On-line résumé posting service. • Employee databank for employers. • Job postings on Web site. • Multimedia resume/ interview/job search resources on CD-ROM and web site.
Developed closer working relations among the three partners.	• Worked with partnering agencies to identify their needs and supported the use of multimedia resources within a customer-directed environment. • Provided a training and learning centre for staff from all three partnering agencies.	• Orientation and training sessions conducted for partner staff. • Set up Executive and Steering Committees (consisting of the three partner organizations' representatives) and held regular meetings.

Regina Career Linx (continued)		
Objectives	Goals	Products and Services
	• Served consultative and facilitating functions to the three partnering agencies in developing a multimedia resource centre. • Provided RCL resources and access to the testing and training centre for use by customers.	
Developed closer strategic relationships with the business community.	• Consulted the business community to determine the degree to which the resources meet their needs.	• Set up Employment Pathing Committee (consisting of employers in the community) and held monthly meetings.
Developed closer strategic relationships with organizations working with work seekers.	• Consulted with equity groups to determine the degree to which the resources meet their needs. • Consulted with public access locations and other interested parties to determine the degree to which the resources meet their needs.	• Set up Career Pathing Employment Committee (consisting of local agency representatives, target and equity group representatives) and held monthly meetings.

RCL was successful in fulfilling its mandate to develop new multimedia career and employment resources that achieved the following:

- improved working relationships among the providers of career and employment resources and the customers of those resources;
- were sensitive to the diversity of customer perspectives, experiences and needs;
- helped work seekers in career planning and decision making; and
- improved labour market opportunities for work seekers and employers.

2. Methodology

The lack of client tracking throughout the design and planning of the CS program resulted in a lack of significant quantitative data, which severely limits the summative evaluation. All three pilot projects were reluctant to obtain client names or detailed client information for the purpose of evaluation because it was perceived to discourage clients from using project services. This practice also limited the collection of quantitative data. The following rationale was also identified as limiting the compilation of client data:

- although RCL was able to do a substantial amount of activity tracking at the centre, individual names were not collected;
- the RP had many technical problems in establishing the WAN system and were unable to implement an electronic on-line survey for clients to complete; and
- the NP counsellors were occupied completing surveys on the local labour force.

2.1 In-depth Key Informant Interviews

In-depth interviews were held with 87 key informants: 23 from the NP (total possible was 57): seven of 11 KCDC Board members; 13 of 43 Northern Career Services Network (NCSN) counsellors; and three of three NP staff. There were 38 key informants from the RP (total number possible was 86): six of seven project facilitators, six out of eight from the Standards Committee; six of eight from the Management Committee; five of 16 from Parkland; five of 11 from Cypress; six of eight from Cumberland; four of six from Prairie West; six of 13 from Northwest; and all five from Southeast (numbers do not total 38 since some key informants were on more than one committee). For Carlton Trail Regional College, there was no Community Consultation Group (CCG) and the project facilitator was unavailable for an interview. There were 20 key informants for RCL (total possible was 38): 11 of 17 from the Employment Pathing Advisory Committee; four of 10 from the Career Pathing Advisory Committee; five of seven from the Steering Committee; and all four of the Executive Committee members (numbers do not total 20 since some key informants were on more than one committee). Finally, there were five key informants from the CS Working Group. A representative sample was obtained from each committee or group. Organizations and geographic areas were also represented.

While the opinions of the CS Working Group members are contained within this report, specific statistics on these opinions are not provided as they are for the key informants at the individual project level. This is because their numbers are so few (five) and their involvement in individual project details was limited.

2.2 Document Review

An extensive document review was conducted. The documents are listed in the Works Cited section at the end of this report.

2.3 Survey of RCL Clients/Users and RCL Non-users

A small group of clients who had used RCL and clients who had used another form of Career Services delivery were surveyed. The sample size was not representative of the total number of clients who visited RCL and therefore the results are qualitative. The surveys were intended to gather information on:

- number and types of services accessed and received;
- benefits of the Career Service delivery project;
- use of technology (if applicable) and perceived helpfulness in job finding and career planning;
- successes and opportunities for improvement of the Career Services delivery project; and
- demographic profile of key informants.

A telephone survey was conducted and self-administered questionnaires (administered by RCL) given to walk-in clients. The sample sizes for the groups were very small due to difficulties in acquiring the names of potential key informants. In total, there were 20 key informants. There were six non-RCL user telephone surveys (three who used HRDC and three who used NCC), four RCL user telephone surveys and 10 RCL walk-in surveys completed. For the purposes of analysis, the RCL walk-in and telephone surveys were grouped together to form the RCL client (user) group.

Three different questionnaires were used for surveying the three different client groups. In these questionnaires:

- common questions were asked of all three groups;
- certain questions were asked only in the telephone surveys; and
- certain questions were asked only of RCL users.

Both closed and open-ended questions were used to gather information. Telephone calls were made between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. from September 14 to 29, 1998.

3. Evaluation Findings

The summative evaluation findings are organized in four main evaluation areas: Relevance, Project Design and Delivery, Project Success, and Project Cost Effectiveness. Evidence to support the evaluation findings is drawn from all three CS pilot projects.

3.1 Relevance

What was the process used to determine the social and economic need for the Career Services program?

In November 1994, Canada and Saskatchewan signed a Labour Force Development Agreement as part of an effort to revitalize Canada's social security system by eliminating barriers to labour force participation. Consultation among stakeholders had identified a need for:

- better coordination of planning and service delivery across the two orders of government;
- more community involvement in the development of programs and services;
- more involvement of employers and various industry sectors in identifying training priorities and providing training opportunities; and
- improved access to training and jobs among persons with disabilities, Aboriginal people, women, members of visible minorities, people on social assistance, youth and displaced workers.

In January 1996, the Canada-Saskatchewan Strategic Initiative Agreement was signed which identified Career Services as one of the priority areas in which to pilot innovative projects. A subsequent decision was made to pilot projects in a variety of Saskatchewan settings — the rural area, an urban centre and the north.

Each of the three projects did a needs assessment including telephone surveys and focus groups in order to develop regionally specific goals and activities. *The Needs Assessment Report* was produced, information was reviewed and the reports were used as the basis for implementation plans. Each project developed a unique set of goals and recommended activities to meet local client needs and gaps in Career Services.

How have the labour force development needs of target groups been incorporated in the design of the Career Services program?

The labour force development needs of target groups were addressed in all three of the CS projects. Each project was based on completed needs assessments and involvement of community representatives.

Key informants in all three CS pilots perceived that the projects were effective in delivering Career Services to equity groups: people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, women, members of visible minorities, social assistance recipients, youth and displaced workers. All three projects have attempted to modify products and services to accommodate people with disabilities. The NP has also been working with the Gary Tinker Foundation on ways to adapt technology for people with disabilities. The RP tested software and hardware for special needs clients and their use was an improvement in Career Services delivery. RCL provided particular software and modified the physical environment to accommodate people with special needs.

The NP facilitated equity groups (primarily Aboriginal people) by providing computer access and training, both in computers and in counselling techniques, to 43 counsellors on the Northern Career Services Network. The counselling curriculum training was designed for northern people who are assuming a counselling role in their communities, the majority of which are of First Nations and Metis Nation ancestry. Eighty-five percent of counsellors, the majority of the KCDC Board, and all the project staff indicated the use of the Internet to find information on Career Services (e.g., job opportunities, career development, and training and employment) was the primary way the project met client needs.

Likewise, the majority of key informants in the RP indicated providing access to computer technology and the Internet were primary ways in which the project met the needs of the target populations. The benefits of training in multimedia and the Internet for both clients and Community Consultation Group members was mentioned by several CCG members. Several CCGs indicated it was beneficial to work in partnerships with other agencies and learn about each other's resources, as this ultimately benefited the clients through an increased numbers of referrals.

Access to Career Service-related technology was cited by RCL key informants as the main way the project met target group needs. RCL staff provided instruction in the use of job finding and career planning technology tools so clients had the knowledge and skills needed to operate independently. Key informant interviews for RCL indicated the project tried to meet the needs of all types of clients by considering those needs in adapting the project and making it accessible to all people in the community. One-fifth of key informants indicated the project successfully met the needs of target groups through on-going community consultation.

Counsellors, agencies and organizations have access to computer technology, and their usage of project services has increased since the projects began. This is an especially valuable resource for those agencies that cannot afford multimedia technology on their own.

What types of innovations are the Career Services programs expected to test?

Prior to the SI program there was minimal use of multimedia technologies in the delivery of Career Services; therefore, the introduction of technology was an innovative approach.

The chart below identifies the innovative activities and services identified by key informants for each CS project, as well as the corresponding mean rating (one-to-ten scale, with one being poor and ten being excellent). These ratings were given only by those who mentioned the innovative activity or product.

In the NP, all stakeholder groups (KCDC Board, project staff and network counsellors) indicated the Internet and Web site was an innovative service. All of the KCDC Board members and project staff indicated that the training provided to counsellors was another innovative service, while 31% of counsellors referred to this as an innovation. Approximately one-third of KCDC Board members (29%) and project staff (33%) mentioned the NCSN and the sharing of information as services put in place by the project, and over two-thirds of the counsellors concurred (77%). The lowest rating in the NP was for e-mail, which several interviewees indicated was underutilized.

In the RP, 82% of interviewees mentioned the Internet and computer technology as an innovation, while 53% mentioned both multimedia and the Career Services Resource Centres themselves. Partnerships and sharing of resources was mentioned by 47% of key informants, and 45% indicated that access to computers was an innovation. The two lowest ratings in the RP were for the Web site and increased awareness and accessibility of Career Services. The Web site received a low rating from key informants due to the technical difficulties experienced with the Wide Area Network (WAN) and the delays this caused to the Web site becoming operational. Increased awareness and accessibility of Career Services received a low rating from key informants in the RP due to delays in promoting and marketing the project, as well as the decision to house project sites in regional colleges, which may have discouraged some clients who were intimidated by the college setting (e.g., social assistance recipients, New Careers Corporation clients, etc.)

All employers, counsellors, and steering and executive committee members identified the RCL Web site as a project innovation. Just over one-third of key informants identified the job postings and the internally produced CD-ROM "Jobs People Love" as effective innovations. Almost three-quarters (73%) of employers identified access to career-related information, while half of counsellors interviewed mentioned job postings, counsellor training and group orientations as innovations produced by the project. The RCL web site particularly impressed key informants and generated comments including "state-of-the-art," "user-friendly and geared towards the general public," and "world-class."

Key Informants' Ratings of CS Projects								
	NP		RP		RCL		Total	
Innovative Activities and Products	**#***	**MR****	**#**	**MR**	**#**	**MR**	**Total #**	**Over-all MR**
Internet/Web sites	23	**8.2**	11	**4.6**	20	**9.5**	54	**7.4**
Increased access to CS info	3	**6.8**	9	**6.0**	8	**8.5**	12	**7.1**
Training/Counsellor Development	14	**8.1**	12	**8.0**	-	-	26	**8.1**
Computer technology	6	**9.0**	31	**8.1**	-	-	37	**8.6**
Career Services Resource Centres/One-stop access centre	-	-	20	**7.9**	10	**8.8**	30	**8.3**
Sharing info/resources network/ partnerships	7	**8.2**	18	**7.9**	-	-	25	**8.0**
LMI (Job Find/Database)	4	**7.8**	-	-	1	**10.0**	4	**8.9**
CD-ROMs/software programs/databases	-	-	15	**6.8**	2	**9.0**	17	**7.9**
E-mail	6	**5.7**	-	-	-	-	6	**5.7**
Video	4	**8.5**	-	-	-	-	4	**8.5**
Symposium	2	**9.5**	-	-	-	-	2	**9.5**
Student training	2	**9.0**	-	-	-	-	2	**9.0**
Mentorship	2	**8.7**	-	-	-	-	2	**8.7**
KCDC Board	2	**8.5**	-	-	-	-	2	**8.5**
Northern Inventory Card Sort	2	**N/A**	-	-	-	-	2	**N/A**
Multimedia	-	-	20	**7.3**	-	-	20	**7.3**
Access to computers	-	-	17	**9.5**	-	-	17	**9.5**
Print Materials	-	-	10	**7.4**	-	-	10	**7.4**
Videos on career planning/job finding	-	-	8	**7.6**	-	-	8	**7.6**
Résumé service	-	-	4	**7.9**	-	-	4	**7.9**
Community presentations	-	-	3	**8.5**	-	-	3	**8.5**
Jobs People Love CD	-	-	-	-	7	**8.3**	7	**8.3**
Job Postings	-	-	-	-	7	**8.8**	7	**8.8**
Group orientations	-	-	-	-	6	**9.0**	6	**9.0**
As an accessible multimedia CS centre	-	-	-	-	5	**8.4**	5	**8.4**
Technology as CS info. delivery system	-	-	-	-	3	**8.7**	3	**8.7**
Walk-in/self-serve approach	-	-	-	-	2	**9.0**	2	**9.0**
Virtual Interviews	-	-	-	-	1	**10.0**	1	**10.0**

* Indicates number of key informants who mentioned the innovative activity or product.
** Indicates the mean rating given by key informants for the innovative activity or product.
\- Indicates that this innovation was not mentioned and rated by the key informants of that particular project.

How does the situation after the Career Services' pilots compare to the situation before them? Have improvements been made to employment services to clients? What have the pilots produced that can be incorporated into the Career Services system as a whole?

The following chart indicates those areas where the projects improved Career Services:

	Northern			Rural			RCL		
	Yes	**No**	**DK/NC***	**Yes**	**No**	**DK/NC***	**Yes**	**No**	**DK/NC***
Career planning	23	0	0	25	1	12	16	0	4
Access to CS/LMI information	23	0	0	28	1	9	16	0	4
Access to jobs	22	1	0	18	2	18	17	0	3
Hiring process	17	6	0	14	4	20	17	0	3
Quality of the workforce	20	1	2	12	3	23	11	0	9
Level/Quality of production in the workforce	16	4	3	4	1	33	3	0	17
*DK/NC = Don't Know/No Comment									

In the NP, 83% of interviewees (KCDC Board members, project staff and NCSN Counsellors) indicated computer technology, including the Internet and multimedia, has improved client service, is frequently used and that its use is steadily increasing. All NCSN counsellors specified that it is now easier and faster to find more job information and training opportunities for clients. Training in the use of technology and counselling methodologies provided to NCSN counsellors improved access to up-to-date information. The mediated access to computer technology meant that job seekers did not directly access the technology and therefore were unable to make specific comments about the technology.

All of the counsellors in the Northern and RCL projects indicated their clients were more aware of the career development process as a result of the CS Program initiative, and believed it improved client self-esteem and confidence. RCL counsellors perceived the use of self-directed services resulted in clients feeling empowered and contributed to increased self-confidence and self-esteem. The primary benefit cited by users of RCL was increased computer technology knowledge and skills. Three-quarters of RCL users thought their involvement with the project would increase their ability to successfully job search. The recruitment of employer organizations into the project design process contributed positively to RCL.

In the RP, Career Services were enhanced and the level of service improved by increasing the availability of public resources. A total of 41% of all interviewees indicated that

computer technology and multimedia were the significant improvements in Career Services. Approximately one-quarter (21%) of key informants indicated improvements in delivery also came from the revised structure of Career Services, the coordination among the seven sites, community agencies and the streamlining effect that has resulted.

It is noteworthy that, of the 23 interviewees who believed that computer technology was the major improvement of the RP, more than one-third of all 31 interviewees (39%) believed that technology was underutilized. Some key informants neither mentioned the technology as an improvement (59%) nor thought the Career Services sites themselves were being accessed (36%). However, several were uncertain if the project had improved access to jobs. In addition, there were more interviewees who were uncertain (rather than positive) about the project having improved the hiring process, the quality of the workforce and the level and quality of production.

3.2 Project Design and Delivery

Have any operational, legislative, regulatory or jurisdictional constraints been identified that impinge on the ability of the Career Services program to achieve its objectives? How were these handled?

All of the KCDC Board and Northern Project staff believed that the administrative management of the project was effective, as did the majority of counsellors. Financial operations ran smoothly.

In the RP, almost half (42%) of key informants believed administrative management of the project was effective; however, 32% of key informants believed that it was ineffective, while the remaining key informants were evenly divided between believing it was improving and being unaware or uncertain. Key informants indicated that operation of the project would have been improved by:

- decreasing the delays in operationalizing the computer technology;
- decreasing the complications with the WAN system; and
- allowing more community input into the decision-making processes to encourage ownership and "buy-in."

Three-quarters of counsellors, 67% of employers and all Executive/Steering Committee members concluded that, overall, administrative management of RCL worked extremely well. Interviews with project staff revealed that the early administrative management structure was confusing to RCL staff because the organization of the project was not clearly communicated. RCL improved significantly with better communication. Turn-around times and conflicting partner policies were cumbersome and impeded the initial progress of the project (e.g., all communication materials, the logo and advertisements underwent time-consuming approval processes).

A large percentage (91%) of key informants in all three CS projects indicated that government partnership is valuable. The two orders of government provide the following four valuable services: direction, expertise and structure that motivates a more effective partnership approach; funding to facilitate projects; faith in the community to address its own needs; and a reduction in duplication of services. Approximately one quarter (27%) indicated that government partnerships could be cumbersome due to perceived bureaucratic excesses (e.g., criteria, guidelines, etc.) and the inherent inflexibility of large-scale organizations.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the organizational structures of Career Services pilot projects?

According to key informant interviews, one of the strengths of the CS pilot projects' organizational structures was the ability to form community partnerships. Most key informants were aware of how the projects' partnerships were originally formed and were able to refer to specific aspects of the partnership process.

Sixty-five percent of Northern Project key informants indicated staffing levels were adequate, however 71% of the KCDC Board believed that more clerical and technical positions were required. In the RP, key informants were evenly divided on the adequacy of staffing levels, and half indicated more staff were required, especially a full-time technically oriented counsellor. Eighty percent of RCL interviewees thought the staffing level was adequate and effective, but nearly 20% indicated adding a Career Service professional counsellor was necessary.

How was the community informed about the Career Services' pilot projects?

The three CS projects engaged in a variety of activities to inform the community about each one's respective project. The NP developed and implemented a public awareness campaign that included electronic updates on the KCDC Web site on specific areas pertinent to the overall campaign. Radio spots in English, Cree and Dene were established to:

- introduce the project and communicate the overall themes;
- outline the implementation of the project's goals and objectives; and
- reinforce the project and its objectives.

The NP placed print ads and submitted press releases to the three major northern publications. Posters and brochures were developed and distributed. The project also produced a video on the career challenges facing new high school graduates and distributed it to CS Network Counsellors and to local cable stations. The information campaign ran from January 1997 to March 1998. Project staff attended many trade and career fairs to promote and publicize the project.

The RP developed a logo, name and Web site to inform the community about the project. They used business cards, brochures, posters, T-shirts, signage and mobile presentations to schools and community-based organizations to promote the project. The individual site facilitators tested promotions using radio, TV and the Saskatchewan Communications Network. There were delays in implementing the marketing strategy due to difficulties in implementing the technology. Several sites held open houses in the spring of 1998. Videos on finding employment and planning careers were aired on SCN. Minutes of all project Management Group and Standards Committee meetings were distributed to CCG members. The Project Facilitator's Reports were distributed to all committee members and provided regular updates on the project's progress. All colleges received minutes of meetings, and Regional Project Facilitators reported to college staff and management. There was frequent communication between project managers and regional project facilitators.

In order to keep the community informed, RCL conducted the following activities:

- placed print ads;
- submitted press releases to major newspapers;
- held a grand opening ceremony;
- made presentations to a variety of community organizations, students and teachers;
- distributed coffee cups, T-shirts and stress balls in the shape of computers; and
- attended conferences, conventions, trade fairs and career fairs.

Employment and Career Pathing Committee members noted project staff regularly sent meeting minutes and Project Activity Updates to Advisory Committee members, as well as making client usage statistics available at meetings.

What measures were taken to track, monitor and assess the projects? Are these adequate?

Each CS pilot project developed its own goals and objectives. These were used to ascertain each project's success in meeting its objectives.

Delays in making the computerized version of the Strategic Initiatives Tracking System operational created obstacles in capturing project data. Client tracking was limited and inconsistent. Information collected on clients at the individual project level was insufficient to track them and therefore it was not possible to obtain client feedback. No client activity tracking was done by the NP. In the RP, client activity tracking forms were developed and implemented from December 1997 to March 1998. The data from the RP was not as detailed as it was for RCL; however, the statistics indicate a decline of 15% in number of times RP services were used between December 1997 (1,039) and March 1998 (906). It is unclear why use of Rural Project services decreased during this time.

RCL recorded the following statistics on project usage for the period September 1997 to July 1998:

- client activity (tracking of numbers and types of visitors and services used);
- number of Web site hits;
- job postings and registered employers; and
- résumés posted on the Web site.

All project usage statistics show a marked increase since the project began. The table below illustrates the increased usage of CS between the project start and July 1998:

RCL Usage Indicator	First Record	Last Record	Increase
Centre visits	143	859	501%
Registered employers	35	200	471%
On-line résumés	163	1,301	698%
Web site hits per day	31	180	480%
Total	372	2,540	583%

RCL sought feedback from the Advisory Committees to assess project successes, effects and needed improvements. Key informant interviews at RCL revealed all counsellors and half of the employer group believed the Advisory Committees served to monitor project success and identify required improvements. Similarly, all Northern Project staff and KCDC Board members interviewed indicated the KCDC Board served the same purposes. In this sense, the partners were able to monitor and assess the project, thereby keeping it "reality-based" and on track.

Client use of services was not formally tracked in the NP. However, project staff estimate each of the 48 counsellors on the NCSN see an average of 20 clients per week. If such estimates are accurate, approximately 4,800 counselling sessions were potentially impacted by enhanced Career Services Worker Training.

3.3 Program Success

What types of partnerships have been developed through the Career Services program?

KCDC consists of agencies that provide Career Services in northern Saskatchewan, including kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12), post-secondary, Metis Pathways and First Nations organizations. Representatives from agencies with a vested interest in Career Services and a genuine desire to work towards a common goal were invited to sit on the board. The KCDC Board directs the mission of the NP: to improve Career Service delivery in the North. The project marks the first time all northern Career Service

providing agencies have worked jointly on a project in which they all have equal decision-making power.

The RP began with the partnership between the seven southern Saskatchewan regional colleges. Representatives of other groups were invited to participate on both the Management and the Standards Committees. Local CCGs were formed at each of the seven sites to provide advice on operational issues, including the function and resources of the multimedia-resource career centres. The partnerships included representation from schools, NCC, HRCCs, economic development authorities, businesses and other members of the community.

The CCGs were given an advisory function without decision-making or budget authority. When there was a collaborative attitude and respect paid to each individual's input, genuine partnerships were formed in the CCGs.

RCL was established by an Executive Committee consisting of senior staff from each of the three core partners. Client needs were addressed through the participation of community organizations and agencies on the Advisory Committee. Operational decisions made by the Steering/Executive Committees were guided by the advice and input of project staff and Advisory Committees.

The CS projects have been able to achieve significant benefits from the development of partnerships. Key informants were asked what the benefits and successes of the partnerships were in an open-ended question, to which they were able to provide more than one answer. The responses of key informants are listed in the following chart:

Benefit of Partnership	NP n=23	RP n=38	RCL n=20
Sharing of information and resources	12	16	12
Partnerships strengthened through learning about each other	11	12	7
Greater access to information (technology)	3	5	16
Training of counsellors	5	2	6
Increased awareness of Career Services	7	4	6

The two most significant benefits of partnerships were:

1) the sharing of information and resources; and
2) the strengthening of partnerships through partners learning about each other.

When asked if partners were involved enough in the CS projects in an open-ended question, key informants indicated an extent of partner involvement that is illustrated in the following chart. RP key informants were the only group to provide more than one response since partner involvement varied at different times with different partners.

Extent of Involvement	NP	RP	RCL
Partners are involved	17	4	9
Partners need to be more involved	3	27	7
Not sure/No comment	3	7	4

There were obstacles to partner involvement in all of the Career Services pilot projects. In the NP, the two main obstacles were:

- lack of per diems to sponsor attendance at meetings; and
- communications problems between management and front-line workers, particularly NCSN counsellors.

The effect of the first obstacle above was a slight decrease in partner participation and commitment, which could have been improved with consistent attendance rates. The effect of the second obstacle may have been to compromise, however slightly, the effectiveness of the NP and its partnerships. The priority of offering Career Services through the NP may not have been consistently apparent to all members of management or NCSN front-line workers at each of the partner agencies. KCDC Board members, each representing a partner agency, did not always keep their entire organization informed and up-to-date on the activities and progress of the NP. In some cases, this resulted in NCSN members feeling uninformed about the NP. When Career Services' responsibilities were added to the already heavy workloads of some NCSN front-line workers, this interfered with their ability to fulfill those responsibilities (i.e., attend NP training sessions or conduct Career Services counselling sessions with clients).

In the RP, the main obstacle was the CCGs perceived lack of input into decision-making. The roles and responsibilities of partners were not clearly defined in the minds of key informants, and buy-in was not obtained from all partners. All CCGs indicated a desire to increase the representation from business, First Nations and Metis Nation groups.

The main obstacle to partnership involvement for RCL was that counsellors and employers were two groups that required more time and effort to secure participation and buy-in for the project. Employers were involved in the initial design of the project, but they discontinued meeting after the first year. Explanations for this provided by RCL key informants were:

- lack of time for continued involvement;
- need to see immediate results for their time investment;
- fear of being inundated with irrelevant résumés; and
- have minimal needs that were addressed in just a few meetings.

Nonetheless, statistics show the involvement of employers has increased significantly since the project began — at the end of July 1998 there were 200 employers registered on the RCL Web site as compared to 35 in early November 1997. RCL key informants indicated that counsellors were another group that were initially reluctant to become involved in the project because they:

- feared being replaced by technology;
- had to alter their established patterns of practice;
- lacked the time to participate; and
- lacked access to technology.

However, counsellors are now accessing the project consistently by referring clients to the RCL centre and the web site. As well, many have incorporated the project as part of their regular Career Service delivery program(s).

In the NP, most partners indicated that the reason for high partner commitment was:

- involvement of partners to the degree they felt ownership of the project; and
- opening of the lines of communication between community agencies and the community at large.

All of the KCDC Board and project staff indicated the NP's partnership strength was the network consensus model which achieved increased cooperation, communication and collaboration among the community agencies involved. Counsellors felt the project reduced their feelings of isolation through the use of e-mail, a common information base and encouragement to cooperate and work together.

In the RP, several key informants found the CCG partnerships were collaborative. However, in some instances, imbalances of power occurred which negatively impacted community input into the decision-making processes. RP key informants identified two factors that deterred community members from fully participating:

- the colleges assumed ownership of the project and, in some CCGs, there was a lack of cooperation between the colleges and the CCGs; and
- representatives of both orders of government were territorial over policy and procedural jurisdictions.

As in the case of the Rural Project's CCGs and the Northern Project's KCDC Board, the Career and Employment Pathing Committee meetings of RCL were structured to allow partners to provide input, feedback, information and evaluation.

The KCDC Board and project staff believed the partnership would continue, but 90% indicated that on-going funding is required. In the RP, key informants were evenly divided on whether or not collaboration would continue: half indicated that collaboration either will or has the potential (depending on the circumstances) to continue, while the other half indicated it has already ended. RCL key informants believed that the partnerships should continue. However, no one indicated that funding was required to sustain the partnerships per se. This difference between the partnerships is explained by the costs associated with travel and time for partnership meetings in the Northern and Rural projects.

Additional benefits of all of the CS projects' partnerships were opportunities for the agencies to discuss common issues and network. All partners came to understand the use and benefits of technology.

How is the Career Services program contributing to increased federal and provincial coordination and collaboration in labour force development? How does this represent an improvement over previous collaboration?

Enhanced coordination of Career Services delivery has evolved because of the involvement of both the federal and provincial governments. Although the process of each order of government may vary, both share the common goal of providing a coordinated, more effective approach to Career Services delivery to better meet client needs.

Having the two levels of government work together on Strategic Initiatives enhanced Career Services delivery by providing a more coordinated approach. For example, RCL utilized staffing and in-kind resources from both orders of government; the project increased communication and provided the opportunity for partners, including those from federal and provincial government agencies, to learn about one another and the specific products and services each provides; and both federal and provincial career counsellors have benefited from training in computer technology and being able to refer clients to RCL.

In addition, both orders of government have been involved in the evaluation of the CS program and have developed a shared understanding of the process and outcomes involved. This will provide a foundation for further coordination in the delivery of employment and training services.

What successes in innovation have been experienced? What challenges have been experienced and how have the challenges been handled?

Indicators of the successes and challenges of the innovations were:

- the opportunities for improvement of technology innovations;
- how clients responded to and accessed project technology;

- key informant usage of, and satisfaction with, multimedia tools; and

- perceptions by key informants' of value of technology.

The major successes of all three CS projects are related to increased access to computer technology. Recently, an independent research firm (CanWin) tested a Web site rating system on the NP and RCL Web sites. NP scored 70% — the major asset identified was the wide array of valuable information while the two main flaws cited were technical quirks and out-dated information. RCL scored 82% — the assets identified were the text and visual layout, links to other Web sites, and amount/type/reliability of information. The flaws were related to the keyword search feature.

Other project successes cited by key informants were:

- the benefit of being able to access the Web site from anywhere;

- the benefit to clients with disabilities or those who cannot easily access the centres or community agencies themselves but do have access via a modem;

- the creation of new ways of delivering services by using technology, multimedia and the Internet to disseminate job finding, career planning and employment information;

- the use of user-friendly and client-centred technology at RCL which was accessible to the general public; and

- accessibility of global employment information through site links.

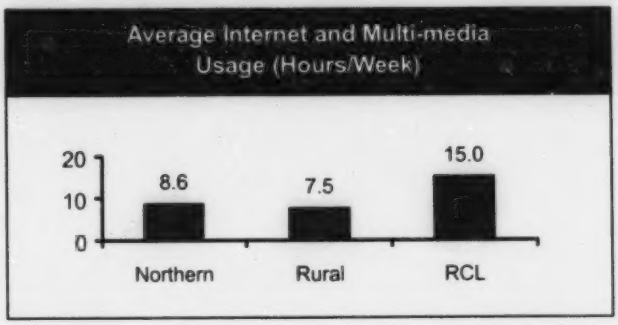
Challenges within the projects were dealt with case-by-case. Examples of some of these challenges and how the projects addressed them are outlined below.

- A difficulty with the self-serve approach at RCL (identified by all counsellors and 78% of employers) and the RP was the lack of a Career Service professional at the project centre. One of the projects' goals was to create a self-serve environment; therefore, in-depth counselling assistance was not available. However, some clients required extra assistance because they were uncomfortable with technology or needed help interpreting the information they found. To address this challenge, RCL offered clients assistance with technology training and referrals to agencies for additional assistance, while the RP provided part-time site facilitators with some training in technology. The counselling gap could be filled by adding a counsellor at the RCL and rural sites, or else by integrating the projects into the CanSask Centres.

- Some partners could not access CS projects' Web site resources because they did not have the computer hardware. This challenge was handled by RCL and the RP through loaner computers provided to partners. Partner contributions within the NP enriched SI funding so computer equipment for northern counsellors could be leased or purchased.

Of the total key informants interviewed in the NP, three members of the KCDC Board did not know the extent to which clients were accessing technology, and two counsellors did not have technology available for clients to use. Three-quarters of key informants indicated clients were accessing technology. Counsellors estimate clients are using computer technology an average of 34% of the time. Most counsellors (69%) perceived clients react positively to the technology and 63% thought training raised user comfort levels. Finally, one-third of NP informants perceived youth were more comfortable with technology than were older people.

The average Internet and multimedia usage was higher for RCL because the Internet was the core element of the project. The main objective was to facilitate its use and to create a usable Career Services Internet product. As well, many employers and project staff interviewed had occupations which utilized this medium heavily.



Many RCL users (86%) and one-third of non-users felt that computer technology assisted them in job finding and career planning. All key informants in the NP and RCL projects believed computer technology was enhancing the work being done and increasing productivity and efficiency, and 41% of RP key informants believed that computer technology was enhancing their work. In the North, technology has particularly enhanced communication. RCL informants thought multimedia was a valuable research tool that provided a more efficient way to get up-to-date information, with a greater range of options available to search for information.

The northern counsellors unanimously agreed, and 75% of RCL counsellors concurred, the CS projects have given them access to new tools that are improving Career Services to clients. Eighty-nine percent of RCL users surveyed in the comparison group research felt that these new tools were meeting their Career Service needs more effectively. Sixty-three percent of RCL users surveyed identified the Internet as a new tool for them. None of the non-RCL users surveyed indicated that the Career Services program they used provided them with access to new tools which they did not have access to before the program.

All NP and RCL project key informants believed that multimedia tools should continue to be used in the future delivery of Career Services. Informants identified the following as necessary components to be involved in the delivery of Career Services:

- career counsellors;
- community representatives and input; and
- employers.

The three major challenges of technology identified by interviewees in all three CS projects were cost, technical knowledge and support, and the rapid obsolescence of technology.

All key informants in RCL and 72% of those in the RP indicated that technology had a positive impact on staff and the conduct of work. People have improved access to information, which becomes more beneficial to productivity as staff proficiency in computer technology increases. Several key informants emphasized that training and exposure to technology increases user comfort levels with technology. Several emphasized the need for career counsellors who are familiar with technology to assist clients. In the RP, several envisioned Career Services delivery as a "one-stop-shop" approach, a central location where clients can access all Career Services.

Key informants of the three CS projects indicated that the main barriers to upgrading computers were:

- cost;
- lack of technical expertise; and
- time.

In the NP, staff were concerned about hardware capabilities at project sites, and some site counsellors were concerned by the length of time it takes to get on-line from remote locations.

Most NP informants were uncertain how clients viewed technology, while 59% of informants in the RP and 50% of RCL informants indicated clients responded well to technology. To nurture an environment where innovative and flexible approaches to Career Services delivery can be nurtured, the following suggestions were made:

- invest in research and development (e.g., of technology);
- nurture partnerships;
- provide on-going funding;
- train clients and counsellors in technology;
- use one-stop-shop approach;

- continue to make locally relevant multimedia products; and
- add additional centres including community centres, schools and malls.

How satisfied are stakeholders, clients and partners with the Career Services' pilot projects?

Information from the client's perspective was not available due to the lack of a client-tracking system. All stakeholders and partners interviewed were very satisfied with RCL and the NP. They were especially pleased with the partnership structure and approach used by the projects. The RCL Advisory Committee meetings and the KCDC Board meetings were a forum for partner feedback. Although some CCGs offered members such a forum for feedback in the RP, not all of them did so consistently. Therefore, while many stakeholders were satisfied with the RP, they were not as satisfied overall as stakeholders were in the other two CS projects.

What are the unintended impacts (or unexpected results or achievements) of the Career Services program?

In the NP, partners brought together the KCDC Board and were able to collaborate on additional projects outside the CS project. The project provided an opportunity for students to design the KCDC Web site even though the original plan had been to contract it out.

3.4 Project Cost-Effectiveness

How were the funding allocations determined? Are the allocations appropriate relative to the identified needs?

The overall budget for the Career Services stream of the Strategic Initiatives Program was $3 million, with each of the three projects receiving $1 million over its duration (January 1996 to June 1998 for the RP and September 1998 for the NP and RCL). A Reference Group was formed to develop guidelines and review proposals for the SI Career Services projects. The group was composed of individuals who were thought to be unbiased and appropriate for the task, including CS Working Group members, Evaluation Working Group members and information technology experts. The Reference Group thought it best to offer project proponents a ceiling figure with which to estimate the budget for their individual projects. Because CS would consist of three projects, each covering a distinct geographical area, the $3 million budget was arbitrarily divided evenly amongst the three. The group thought that some proposals might estimate less than the ceiling of $1 million, while others might estimate more, which would allow for an appropriate distribution of funds between projects. However, every proposal submitted exceeded the $1 million mark, and so the group had the three projects selected scale back their budgets to $1 million each. Funding allocations may have been inappropriate for needs since the remote locations of the NP and RP meant that these projects were more costly. However, these needs were not formally identified prior to budget allocations.

Each project was responsible for determining funding allocations for the pre-operational and operational phases within this budget. Pre-operational funding was given but, if the pilot project did not use it all, unused amounts could be transferred to other portions of the project.

Is the Career Services initiative a cost-effective way of achieving the initiative's objectives?

Key informants from all CS projects indicate the cost to sustain them will be less than the development costs because many of the products and systems are in place.

Eighty-three percent of key informants in the NP stated resources were used effectively. Almost all interviewees (96%) believed that the NP was a cost-effective model since, from their perspective, northerners save money through increased local access to information and E-mail communication, both of which reduce substantial travel costs. Sustainability costs are estimated at $150,000 to $200,000 per year.

Two-thirds of key informants in the RP believed resources were used effectively. The remainder of informants cited the following as reasons they believed resources were not used in a consistently effective manner:

- lack of support for technologies;
- unclear allocation of resources due to college ownership of project; and
- lack of advertising and promotion in the communities.

Three-quarters of key informants in the RP indicated it was a cost-effective model for the delivery of Career Services, although no significant reasons were consistently identified. The most common reason for expressing doubts about cost-effectiveness was that the project appeared to have little impact (i.e., low participation, low number of returns to work) for the amount of money invested in it.

Over four-fifths of key informant interviewees (84%) indicated that RCL was a cost-effective way of delivering Career Services. Almost all key informants (89%) indicated that project resources were used effectively. The project was viewed as cost-effective, from the perspective of career counsellors, because clients could access resources without assistance, thereby freeing up counsellor time (26%).

Two RCL Executive Committee key informants indicated it would have been more cost-effective to have one Saskatchewan Web site coordinated province-wide (with northern, rural and urban links) rather than three separate web sites. Reasons for this included that each site has common links and areas that were developed separately, resulting in overlap in some areas.

All KCDC Board members indicated that they made in-kind contributions to the NP including staff time, office supplies and equipment, technology equipment, and some made financial contributions, as well. Roughly half of the NCSN counsellors indicated their organizations made various in-kind contributions to the NP, including supplies and computer equipment. These in-kind contributions can be quantified once a formal audit of the NP's budget, including each agency's contributions, has been completed.

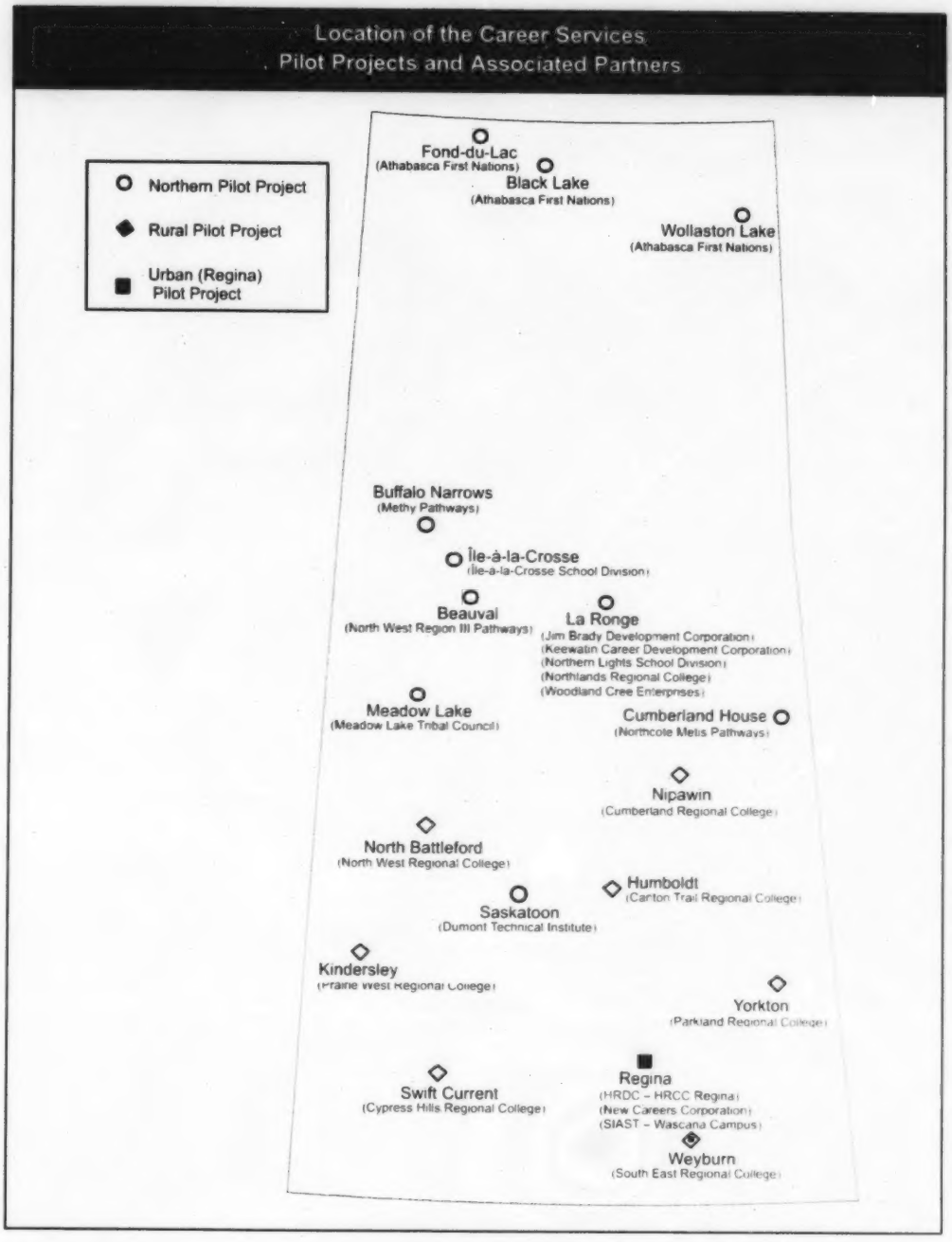
In terms of human resources, as the following chart indicates, KCDC Board members spent anywhere from 12 hours a month to 72 hours a month, averaging approximately 36 hours per month of regular working time on the NP. Several members worked overtime; on average, 13.7 hours a month of unpaid overtime were spent by KCDC Board members on the NP. Northern project staff, who were full-time workers on the project, worked an average of 20 hours a month of unpaid overtime over the course of the project. Two NCSN counsellors put only minimal time into the NP for training. Of the remaining 11, there were 3.2 to 7 hours per day devoted to Northern project work and career development with clients. On average, 4.8 hours of Career Services work per day was being done by each Network counsellor. Most key informants thought this time was sufficient, although several indicated they could have done more if more time were available.

Time spent on the RP varied among key informants from a minimal amount of approximately two hours of regular work time in total to 75% of the regional facilitator's regular full-time positions. The least amount of unpaid overtime worked was two hours in total, while the most was 60 hours per month. The average amount of unpaid overtime worked was 14 hours per month. Key informants were evenly divided between the amount of time available being sufficient and believing that more time was required. For RCL key informants, the amount of time spent on the project was highest for project staff, who were full-time, and minimal for Advisory Committee members at 1.5 hours per month. The amount of unpaid and overtime hours for the project was low, with the exception of project staff, one counsellor and one of the executive committee members. Less than half of key informants (47%) felt the time was sufficient for completing the work and the main barrier for increased participation was the lack of time on behalf of the partners.

Group	Low	High	Average	Overtime	Sufficient
KCDC Board	12 hrs/mo	72 hrs/mo	36 hrs/mo	13.7 hrs/mo	Yes
KCDC Staff	160 hrs/mo	160 hrs/mo	160 hrs/mo	20 hrs/mo	Yes
NCSN Counsellors	64 hrs/mo	140 hrs/mo	96 hrs/mo	N/A	Yes
RP Regional Facilitators	40 hrs/mo	120 hrs/mo	80 hrs/mo	N/A	No
RP Committee Members	Minimal	80 hrs/mo	3 hrs/mo	14 hrs/mo	Yes
RCL staff	160 hrs/mo	160 hrs/mo	160 hrs/mo	20 hrs/mo	No
RCL Advisory committee members	1 hr/mo	3 hrs/mo	1.5 hrs/mo	0	No
RCL Exec. members	4 hrs/mo	40 hrs/mo	15.5 hrs/mo	5 hrs/mo	Yes

Key informants were divided as how to best sustain the CS activities. The majority indicated that both levels of government should continue to fully fund the projects. Three-quarters (74%) of key informants in the NP were of this opinion. In the RP, 21% thought that the provincial government should fund the project and 23% thought both levels of government should continue to fund it, which represents 44% of all key informants in total who favour some sort of government funding. Over half of RCL key informants (60%) thought that both orders of government should continue to fund the project. However, some interviewees also thought that stakeholders and partners should contribute, as well (31% in NP, 18% in RP and 15% in RCL). In RCL (35%) and the NP (39%), several interviewees also suggested charging a fee for value-added services (e.g., job postings and work placement services). Almost three-quarters (71.4%) of RCL users would pay a fee for using Career Services, and 83% of non-users would also pay a fee.

Appendix 1: Career Services Project Boundaries Map



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